The Importance of Electronic Health Record Training

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Background

A practice that focuses too much attention on implementing an electronic health record (EHR) may overlook the need for sound training on the system. Practices should carefully consider the training requirements associated with an EHR before making a selection. In general, the vendor is responsible for providing training on their product; poorly trained staff can lead to frustration and potential disappointment in the EHR system. The following information is intended to help guide a practice in determining staff requirements related to system training.

Electronic Health Record Training

The Iowa Foundation for Medical Care published a list entitled, "*Not 10, But 11 EHR Training Tips*." This list provides a checklist for the practice to consider when working with staff and the vendor who will conduct the EHR training. These pointers include items such as: assessing the staff's PC skill level; coordinating training session dates and times with the staff; interviewing the trainer on their experience working with the selected EHR system and leading the training sessions; coordinating the topics and sections to address in the sessions; determining the location for the training sessions ; and setting aside time prior to the sessions to discuss the workflow processes of the practice with the trainer. The checklist is located at:
http://www.internetifmc.com/provider/documents/11_ehr_training_tips.pdf.

Medical Economics published an article entitled, "*EMR Success: Training is the Key,*" which states that a practice should plan the computer education as carefully as one selects the EHR system. The article emphasizes that the practice should: map out on paper how the staff accomplishes a task; schedule training sessions that will be distraction-free for the staff; prepare the physicians and staff mentally for the EHR training; allow sufficient training time for the staff to gradually absorb and understand the instruction; and designate certain physicians and employees who champion the EHR as "super users," to serve as experts in assisting the staff after the EHR system goes live and in training new hires. The article is located at:
http://www.providersedge.com/ehdocs/ehr_articles/EMR_Success-Training_is_the_Key.pdf.

The American Health Information Management Association published an article entitled, "*Designing Effective Training*." The author uses an analogy that equates the process of building an educational EHR training program with the building of a house. The five principles identified for designing a good training program are: *perform a needs assessment and analysis* by gathering information on the practice's learning needs and the necessary business results from managers, administrators, and other stakeholders; *design* the tools that will guide the training by defining the learning objectives and how to measure for success; *develop* the training program by producing the course materials; *implement* the program by performing a test run before going live with the training program; and *evaluate* the program's success in teaching the course

materials and meeting the business goals. The article is located at:
http://library.ahima.org/xpedio/groups/public/documents/ahima/bok1_027236.hcsp?dDocName=bok1_027236.

Revenue XL, a healthcare technology consulting company, published the article "*8 Cardinal Sins of Electronic Medical Records (EMR) Training*" to guide their clients in developing an effective training program. The article suggests practices: reduce the time gap between holding the training session and going live with the EMR system; avoid training of every staff member on every feature of the EMR and instead, develop a training plan based on staff roles; not assume that training ends after implementation; avoid having the EMR vendor train staff in basic computer skills; choose on-site training versus using remote training through web hosts such as Webex or GoToMeeting sessions over the Internet; insist that the vendor provide formal training materials or have the staff record the training session for future reference; work with the vendor in designing the training sessions customized to the practice's specific requirements; and confirm the trainer's credentials before they come on-site for the training session. The article is located at: http://www.revenuexl.com/blog/bid/23066/8-Cardinal-Sins-of-Electronic-Medical-Records-EMR-Training.

HealthLeaders Media is a multi-platform healthcare media company. The article entitled, "*EHR Implementations: Success Lies Beyond the Build*" discusses the approach to implementing effective EHR training. The article encourages practices to work with the vendor in creating a training plan that clearly communicates the vision, mission, and approach with regard to its staff, curriculum, and workflow process. The practice should obtain leadership support for the training strategy, identify potential trainers early in the process, determine the training methodology, evaluate the practice's computer knowledge and skills, develop a process for distributing updated training materials to the staff, set up an environment for staff to test the skills learned after training, and work with the trainer to effectively transfer the knowledge during instruction to the staff. The article is located at:
http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/232196/topic/WS_HLM2_TEC/EHR-Implementations-Success-Lies-Beyond-the-Build.html##.

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